



East of England
All Party Parliamentary Group

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The Rt Hon John Glen MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Rd
London
SW1A 2HQ

6th February 2023

Dear Minister

We are writing to you following a Westminster Hall debate on Levelling Up the East of England, which took place earlier in the week, on 31 January 2023.

It raised the stark truth that the East of England continues to receive a poor deal in terms of government spending. The capital investment it received in 2020-21 was the third lowest of any region and considerably lower than the England and UK average, and it sits towards the bottom of the league table for recipients of Levelling Up Round One and Round Two funding.

Our region has all the building blocks to maximise return on the Government's investment. We have a huge number of international gateways, including 13 ports and 4 airports. This makes us a strategic gateway for the rest of the UK and means that improving our connectivity will boost the whole country's trading prospects and be in service of the Government's Global Britain agenda.

In short, investment in our transport infrastructure isn't just a vote of confidence in the people of the East of England and recognition of the contribution they make; it's a key to unlock further growth across the whole of the country.

Yet, while other parts of the country receive record levels of funding across their rail networks, the East of England continues to be held back from achieving its potential. There are two clearly-defined interventions that you could make in the short-term to set this right:

- 1. Commitment to funding the next phase of development work for Ely and Haughley Junctions**

As a result of being home to four international airports and 13 ports, including two freeports, half of the UK's containerised goods transit through the East of England, with a combined value of £16bn.

Yet, capacity constraints around Ely and Haughley Junctions significantly limit the number of freight trains able to carry these goods to the Midlands and North, adding more HGVs to the road. Funding improvements to these rail junctions would unlock significant gains for the wider economy.

In the case of Haughley, it would offer a low-cost way of reducing delays to services on the Great Eastern Main Line and improve reliability for freight trains to and from the Port of Felixstowe. And in the case of Ely, it would benefit its five connecting lines to Ipswich, Norwich, Cambridge, Peterborough and Kings Lynn, in addition to transforming freight capacity. This combines towards a very strong business case.

A commitment from the Government to fund the next phase of development work for Ely and Haughley junctions is sorely needed and would help address the comparative lack of investment in the region.

2. Restoring four trains per hour on the Stansted Express

It cannot be right that the fastest recovering and fourth busiest airport in the country, let alone the region's major gateway to the world, is only being served by two trains per hour into London rather than the 'turn up whenever' four trains per hour service it received prior to Covid, which provides a minimum standard for an airport of its size.

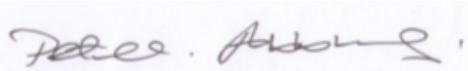
The effect of less frequent trains is to make rail travel to Stansted less attractive than other modes of transport. Government data is already showing significant modal shift away from rail and towards the use of private car, driving up emissions. It also leaves the airport fighting with one hand tied behind its back when competing for international airline investment against the other major London airports, which each enjoy better and more resilient rail connectivity into the capital.

Even more puzzling, we are told by Greater Anglia, which runs the Stansted Express, that restoring four trains per hour would be revenue-generating for their franchise, stimulating a net increase in passengers to overcome the incremental costs of adding new services.

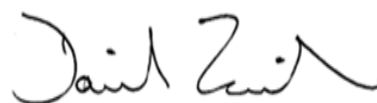
In short, it's a win-win, promoting the financial sustainability of the rail network as it recovers from Covid. However, we hear the Treasury is still yet to greenlight the 4tph timetable in time for May 2023 and the start of a busy summer season during which the airport is set to equal its 2019 passenger volumes.

We are not asking for more than a fair share for our region. In the East of England, as is true across the country, there are examples of great success and of significant deprivation. But we have the ingredients for a strong regional economy and, with the Government's help, can be an exemplar of levelling up in action.

Yours sincerely



Peter Aldous MP
Co-Chair, East of England APPG

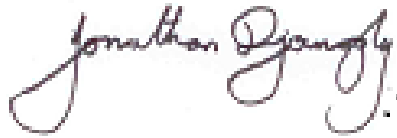


Daniel Zeichner MP
Co-Chair, East of England APPG

Please note this letter has been co-signed by MPs, Peers and Cllrs from across the region and is being copied to Huw Merriman MP Minister for Rail and Dehenna Davison MP Levelling Up Minister



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Vice Chair
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Jonathan Djanogly MP
Vice Chair
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Cllr Matthew Hicks
Chair, EELGA and
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Rt Hon Chloe Smith MP
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John Baron MP
MP for Basildon and Billericay

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Vice Chair,
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Lord Stewart Jackson
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